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The Spectator

Thursday, January 30, 2025

Volume LXV
Number I

Publishing the Truth, From Good Motives and For Justifiable Ends

President Tepper shares creative reflections and goals at Alexander Hamilton birthday celebration

by Charlotte Post ’27
STAFF WRITER

On Jan. 28, the Office of Alumni Relations hosted the first Alexander Hamilton birthday party with President Steven Tepper. Over 100 alumni joined the online gathering, which was led by Regional Committee leaders Jazmín Gatto de Torres ’02 and Dave Sadove ’10. As part of their winter series, the Anytown chapter of the Regional Affairs Commitee connects Hamiltonians in less populated regions and organizes virtual events.

Before the fireside chat began, Hamiltonians chatted, laughed and caught up. Tepper kicked off the chat with an anecdote about the harsh Clinton weather, joking that he congratulates himself each time he makes it up the Hill. He went on to say that becoming Hamilton’s president was the “best decision [he’s] ever made.”

Next, Tepper played an energetic video filled with vibrant visuals and music, intending to showcase the spirit of Hamilton. In the video, students and alumni discussed the countless “What If?” opportunities at Hamilton, aiming to inspire alumni to support the College’s mission of becoming a leading creative and innovative liberal arts institution.

Tepper then reflected on his time at Hamilton and shared his vision for the College’s future. He highlighted how Hamilton continues to honor the legacy of Alexander Hamilton, our “creative founding father who was looking to the future.” Tepper emphasized the need to view Hamilton College as “Hamilton saw the nation”—a place for imaginative, forward-thinking ideas that can shape education, the economy and culture.

Tepper noted his first impressions of the College, calling it the “best learning environment” and “place to spend the next four years for intellectual growth.” Tepper expressed how the deeply engaged students play a vital role in what makes Hamilton so special, referring to them as “edge of the seat students” always eager to ask questions. He explained that students often describe the campus as a place where we “hold the door open for each other,” both literally and metaphorically, due to Hamilton’s supportive, exploratory learning environment that encourages collaboration among Hamiltonians rather than competition according to Tepper. He explained that Hamilton students are not only highly motivated and rigorous but also deeply curious, largely due to the open curriculum. They enjoy exploring unique, niche courses outside their major. He also acknowledged the wonderful talents of the professors who are “master craftsmen,” “approaching everything as an artist would” and thinking about how to best prepare students for a rapidly changing world.

Tepper shifted the conversation to Hamilton’s vision for becoming the most “important liberal arts college,” focusing on key areas for attention: human-human, human-machine, human-idea and human-environment interactions.

PHOTO COURTESY OF COLLEGEPRESIDENTS.ORG

President Steven Tepper lead a virtual celebration for Alexander Hamilton's 270th Birthday.

PHOTO COURTESY OF HAMILTON COLLEGE ALUMNI EVENTS

Hamilton College Alumni will host events in locations including Orange County, New York City, Altanta, Philidelphia and Boston over the next two weeks for Hamiltonians to reconnect and celebrate Alexander Hamilton’s Birthday.

On the topic of technology, Tepper called for "authentic intelligence" rather than artificial intelligence, envisioning technology integrated across all disciplines, with each field contributing to the future of innovation. He underscored the new Innovation Center, which broke ground this fall, as a space for students to collaborate, take risks and advance creative ideas. Tepper also highlighted Hamilton's partnership with the Oneida Nation, reflecting the College's ongoing commitment to innovation grounded in its rich historical traditions.

Tepper acknowledged the ongoing critiques of higher education, particularly concerns about price and value. However, he emphasized Hamilton's ambitious goal of "designing our own future" through the "What If?" initiative, which includes over 300 proposed ideas, some of which are already in progress. Additionally, he mentioned Hamilton's new academic programs, including Curatorial, Jewish, and American Indigenous Studies programs.

The final segment of the event allowed for alumni to ask questions, which included concerns about DEI and the potential for an art/creative requirement in the curriculum. In response to the first, Tepper affirmed that there has been "no change in the way we are advancing" DEI efforts, emphasizing the commitment to ensure every student can thrive. Regarding the art requirement, the President expressed hesitation, noting that students who take art classes at Hamilton are genuinely motivated by the open curriculum. However, he believes Hamilton can do more to integrate art across disciplines. Tepper acknowledged the "energetic and creative spirit" of Kirkland College, saying that Hamilton and its student body continue to embody and appreciate it today.

Tepper ended the call by saying, "We are a national laboratory for human capital. What we're really about is producing humans that are most attuned and prepared for the challenges that we face. We are all aligned by the basic purpose of creating that incredible environment for human growth and learning."

Student criminal proceedings continue

by Erin Delaney '26 & Nicole Greenberg '25
NEWS EDITOR & EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

On Tuesday, Jan. 28, Adyn Brenden's criminal proceedings continued at the Kirkland Town Courthouse. Brenden, class of 2027, was suspended from Hamilton College after being identified as a suspect in the "vandalism and defacing of college property with hate speech," according to a public statement put out by President Steven Tepper on Oct. 14. Brenden was charged with a single count of Aggravated Harassment 1st Degree (a class "E" felony) after defacing the Crossroads Community Mural Project with antisemitic remarks, as previously reported by *The Spectator*.

On Oct. 11, State Police Marcy Bureau of Criminal Investigation responded to a report of "antisemetic remarks posted on art canvasses on campus," according to New York State Police. Several interviews were conducted, and video surveillance was reviewed to identify the suspect.

"We must all denounce anti-semitic speech and hate speech of any kind; reject it with every fiber of our being. I ask everyone to stand together in solidarity and to hold one another accountable for maintaining this extraordinary learning environment free from intimidation," Tepper wrote in a statement to the Hamilton community.

Justice Jay G. Williams '83, the Town Justice in the Town of Kirkland, conducted the hearing over the phone, citing the distance between Brenden's legal representation and the Kirkland Town Courthouse. Robert M. Schechter of Tilem & Associates in White Plains, NY is representing Brenden in this matter. Brenden was not present for the phone call; his attorney Schechter stated there was no need for him to attend. Justice Williams permitted two representatives of *The Spectator* to listen to the call.

Justice Williams and Schechter ultimately agreed upon an adjournment with consent, pausing any proceedings until Feb. 25. While an appointed Assistant District Attorney was present during Tuesday's phone call, Schechter repeatedly indicated that the elected District Attorney, presumably Todd Carville of Oneida County, should be present for the Feb. 25 hearing. However, it is possible a resolution may take place before the next Feb. 25 hearing, in which case everyone will need to appear for another phone call, including Brenden himself. "If it's going to be resolved, he's got to be present," Williams said.

If the proceedings continue as planned, without a resolution, Schechter expressed belief that Brenden's sentence will be reduced on Feb. 25. After the call, however, Justice Williams told *The Spectator* that there is no guarantee of what will happen and Schechter's statements should be understood as speculation.

PHOTO COURTESY OF TILEM & ASSOCIATES, PC

Robert M. Schechter, an associate at Tilem & Associates, is representing Brenden.

PHOTO COURTESY OF FELT EVANS, LLP

Jay G. Williams III '83 is the Town Justice of the Town of Kirkland.

January 30, 2025

Debate Team prepares for spring season

By Elva Chen ’28
FEATURES CONTRIBUTOR

Elva Chen is an active member of the Hamilton Debate Team, serving as PR Director and Equity Officer since December 2024.

After a relaxing winter break, the Hamilton Debate Team has launched its preparation for spring tournaments. In the fall semester, Debate President Theodore Gercken ’27 and Novice Coach Timothy Colledge ’25 worked to restore the team to its pre-COVID competitive model by increasing competition and practice requirements, along with upping the number of travel tournaments.

As a part of this initiative, the debate executive board facilitated a highly selective first round of tryouts in late September. Many students vied for a finite number of spots. After a week of deliberation, the Executive Board invited Pedro Barata ’28, Elva Chen ’28, Maxwell Gold ’28 and honorary member President Steven Tepper to join the team. To kick off the competitive season, the team attended the Drexel University and Binghampton University tournaments. Then, following an intensive week of training, new and old members attended the following tournament at Tufts University.

The new members holed up in KJ to prepare for these early tournaments, practicing and writing cases on topics that sparked their interest. They chose to defend a wide variety of motions, debating “This House believes that life under a government is superior to life under anarchy,” “This House, as Walter White, would not work with Jesse Pinkman as partners in the methamphetamine drug trade” and “This House believes that the US overthrowing the Venezuelan government is a net good.” Other team members, also diligently preparing for the season, chose to write on the Trolly Problem, the Mongol Empire, Double Elimination Tournaments, North Korean Sanctions, the Electoral College, the United Nations and *The Bee Movie*.

PHOTO COURTESY OF HAMILTON COLLEGE

Hamilton College Debate Team hosts practices in KJ classrooms twice a week.

After putting the final touches on their cases, the team faced one another in an at-home tournament over Halloweekend. Over the course of eight rounds, each team alternated between arguing for and against each case to determine potential holes and weaknesses in their arguments. Gathered in Root Hall, the team deliberated for hours on end to refine the cases in preparation for the following weekend’s tournament at Northeastern University. At Northeastern, the team competed against schools such as Dartmouth and University of Chicago and emerged invigorated to continue refining their cases.

After countless hours of fine-tuning their cases, the team arrived at their next tournament, which took place online at American University, debuted at the online tournament. The teamwork had paid off as judges gave high praise, the novices held their own against varsity competitors and Novice Coach Timothy Colledge ended the tournament with an impressive 4-1 record, which would have made him eligible to advance to the semi-finals had he not competed alone.

To close the semester, an election was hosted in early December for Executive Board positions. This process also included new members, as Pedro Barata became Vice President and Maxwell Gold was elected Treasurer. Tim Colledge and Theodore Gercken remained as Novice Coach and President. With the new leadership in place, the Executive Board hosted a second round of tryouts during the last week of the semester. They invited three new members: Eunsol Do ’28, Kait Podlich ’28, and Jubilee Kim ’28 to finish the team’s Class of 2028.

Freshly stacked with a talented cohort of new members, the Hamilton Debate Team anticipates a lively and triumphant season ahead. Beyond refining their existing cases, members have also begun to craft new cases to keep rival schools on their toes. Welcoming in three additional members this spring will also bring fresh perspective and energy, strengthening the team’s collective spirit.

The Hamilton Debate Team has six more tournaments to look forward to, including the National Championship hosted by New York University. As the team prepares for the season ahead, optimism and determination to remain at an all-time high for a successful semester.

PHOTO COURTESY OF HAMILTON COLLEGE

The Debate Society was founded in 1902.

EDITORIAL

January 30, 2025

Dear Hamilton Community,

Welcome back! We hope you all had a restful and restorative winter break, and that your return to campus is neither too soon or too cold. Now that we're back on campus, it's the time to hunker down through the cold, break out our earmuffs and use up what we can only hope is a deep supply of hot cocoa.

While most of us are returning to campus, there is one new group that must be acknowledged! Jans! Their arrival, long anticipated, marks a new turn in the Hamilton community—new blood that will add excitement and a needed change of pace. To those inclined to mock the Jans, be kind, they are just doing their best like we all did when we first arrived on the Hill. It's not their fault they're annoying and couldn't get in through regular admissions. Just jokes. We love Jans. So much.

While for Jans and all freshmen, Spring semester will bring in new experiences, new friendships (when you realize you hate the friends you made in October) and mastery of avoiding tracking snow into your dorms, for seniors, it may be a more melancholy semester. The 'firsts' freshmen are seeing for the first time are 'lasts,' but that should only make them more special. Whatever your year, stop and smell the roses (when they finally bloom in May) and enjoy your time here.

All students should check out the Student Orgs Club Fair, Friday Jan. 31! Just about every club will host a table and offer/force you to sign up to come to their events. It's an excellent opportunity to meet new people and find your spot here on the Hill.

Sincerely,
The Spectator

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Celebrating 157 years,
we *were first published as* The Hamilton Campus *in 1866*.

The Spectator

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The Spectator's Letter to the Editor section is designed to be a forum for the entire Hamilton community to discuss and debate campus, local, national, and global issues. Pieces published in the section express the opinion of the individual writers and are not necessarily the opinions of *The Spectator*, its editors or the Media Board.

Letters to the Editor are welcome from all students, alumni/ae, faculty, friends of the college, and Hamilton community members.

The Spectator has the following policies for submission:

1. Submissions are due by 10:00 p.m. on the Monday before publication. The editors reserve the right to refuse any late submissions.
2. Letters should be no longer than 500 words. The editors reserve the right to cut off letters at 500 words.
3. Letters submitted anonymously will not be printed.
4. *The Spectator* reserves the right not to publish any letter it deems inappropriate for publication.
5. If a piece is determined to be libelous, an unwarranted invasion of privacy, or an unnecessary and/or unwarranted ad hominem or personal attack, it will not be published.

About Us

The Hamilton College Spectator, *publication number USPS 612-840, is published weekly by the Hamilton College Student Media Board while classes are in session. For more information e-mail spec@hamilton.edu. Our offices are located on the second floor of the Sadove Student Center. The deadline for advertisements is Monday the week of publication. For further information, please e-mail specads@hamilton.edu.*

January 30, 2025

SPEC SINGLES

MEG GIDO:

Hometown: Saddle River, NJ.

Major: Biology.

Home on Campus: Dirty Dunham.

Turn on: Mathletes.

Turn off: "Let me just play devil's advocate"

What TV character do you relate to most? Strawberry Shortcake.

How do you rizz? Intense eye contact.

What are three things you cannot live without? Ranch, Euphoria Coffee, Orgo Office Hours.

If you could join one group on campus, what would it be? Dark Side Queens (DSQs)

If you could break one rule at Hamilton and get away with it, which would you choose? Stealing a ceramic mug from mons.

Best hook-up spot on campus? Second Floor Root Hall Bathroom. <3

Thumbs up? MCQ Pizza.

Thumbs down? Beard trimmings in the communal sinks.

Campus crush? Whoever threw the banana at the Citrus Bowl.

Perfect date? Probably June Ninth.

Weirdest thing currently in your room? A bag of rugby balls.

What food would you be and why? Strawberries, because if you don't like me, you're wrong.

Lights on or lights off? On.

Favorite campus study spot? Science Center Atrium.

Light side or dark side? Light Side!!!

What is the meaning of life? Eating as many Trader Joe's Takis as humanly possible.

Who is your celebrity crush? Florence Pugh or Danny Devito.

Where do you see yourself in 10 years? Not in jail for tax evasion (fingers crossed!).

Describe yourself in 3 words: Busy, in lab.

Soundtrack to your life: "Silk Chiffon" by MUNA ft Phoebe Bridgers.

First thought this morning: Why do my feet hurt?

What's your type? Women.

Dealbreaker: If they're a J.O.B.

MAX BRATTER:

Hometown: Miami Beach, FL.

Major: Sociology.

Home on Campus: Kirkland.

Turn on: Quality banter.

Turn off: Keyboard warriors.

What TV character do you relate to most? Homer Simpson.

How do you rizz? Asking at pub where they go to college.

What are three things you cannot live without? Movies, cinnamon raisin bagels and my Kindle.

If you could join one group on campus, what would it be? I'm already on it (*The Spectator*).

If you could break one rule at Hamilton and get away with it, which would you choose? Stealing a Mac desktop from media lab.

Best hook-up spot on campus? Fieldhouse sand pit.

Thumbs up? Espressos.

Thumbs down? Slamming bathroom stall doors.

Campus crush? TBD.

Perfect date? Tomorrow

Weirdest thing currently in your room? A wholesale box of splenda

What food would you be and why? Greek yogurt with fruit because I'm healthy for you and I'm sweet.

Lights on or lights off? Lights dimmed.

Favorite campus study spot? Library 24-hour room.

Light side or dark side? Light Side (formerly Dark Side).

What's the meaning of life? Ball is life.

Who is your celebrity crush? Natalie Portman.

Where do you see yourself in 10 years? Lawyer working remote from the beach.

Describe yourself in 3 words: Cheeky, sometimes dense.

Soundtrack to your life? "703 by Tommy Richman.

First thought this morning? Get this bread (and do homework).

What's your type? Gentlewomen.

Dealbreaker: Boston Celtics fans.

2024 POP CULTURE QUIZ

1. What drink is at the center of the movie Babygirl?
   a. Orange juice
   b. Champagne
   c. Milk
   d. Pepsi
2. Who plays the older “Sue” in The Substance?
   a. Nicole Kidman
   b. Angelina Jolie
   c. Demi Moore
   d. Michele Pfeiffer
3. What was Charlie xcx’s top song in her brat album?
   a. Everything is Romantic
   b. Von Dutch
   c. So I
   d. 365
4. Who is Drake beefing with?
   a. J.Cole
   b. Kendrick Lamar
   c. Rick Ross
   d. Future
5. What is Chappel Roan’s real name?
   a. Kayleigh Amstutz
   b. Rose Hunt
   c. Gwen Mistillo
   d. Francis Sargent
6. Which Olympic athlete also perfomed on Dancing with the Stars?
   a. Simone Biles
   b. Stephen Nedoroscik
   c. Ilona Maher
   d. Sunisa Lee
7. Which celebrity crashed their own celebrity look alike contest?
   a. Taylor Swift
   b. Timothee Chalamet
   c. Zendaya
   d. Ed Sheerhan
8. Which artist coined the title “gender-bender” for their 2024 album?
   a. Beyonce
   b. Kacey Musgraves
   c. Kali Uchis
   d. Ice Spice

SPEC WINTER PLAYLIST

By Anoushka Aswin ‘25

Snow Song
Adrianne Lenker
01:20 - 03:30

Tapestry
Carole King
01:20 - 03:30

It’s All Over Now, Baby Blue
Joan Baez
01:20 - 03:30

Blackout Drunk
Suki Waterhouse
01:20 - 03:30

Greenville
Lucinda Williams
01:20 - 03:30

Image
Magdalena Bay
01:20 - 03:30

Solitude
Billie Holiday
01:20 - 03:30

Aphasia
Pinegrove
01:20 - 03:30

2024: an election autopsy, part III

by Matthew Collins '25
OPINION EDITOR

Childhood amnesia explains that memories formed as toddlers rarely survive intact into adulthood. Consequently, 2006 barely registers in my memories; the only event I can recall is the birth of my younger brother. Four-year-old me, as it turns out, was missing out on a lot: the Montenegrin declaration of independence, Pluto's infamous demotion to dwarf planet status and coups in both Fiji and Thailand, all while two of the most powerful Americans on the face of the planet today were busy hosting shows on NBC.

Over the past decade, Donald Trump has remade the conservative politics of America in his image. As a result, the Republican Party of today now resembles a traditional European conservative party far more than the economically laissez-faire coalition of Reagan and Bush Senior. However, Trump's coalition required fresh blood in order to effect such change; as the 2020 election proved, reliance on the voter base he could mobilize was no longer enough to secure electoral victory. The multiracial swath of young men who flocked to Trump in droves last year thus did so for different reasons than the Rust Belt swing voters that first delivered him the presidency. After all, he may lead the Republican Party of today, but it is Joe Rogan who defines its culture.

The Joe Rogan Experience is a notoriously freeform —or so I am told—exploration of whatever crosses the mind of the titular host and his guests. In spite of this lack of focus, recurring themes of eclecticism, historical nostalgia and distrust of mainstream institutions have established a somewhat cogent worldview that repeatedly draws in an astounding quantities of listeners. Above all else, Roganism offers a definition of manhood that millennials and Gen Z men have evidently found highly appealing: one that prizes physical self-cultivation, sexual conquest and confidence in one's own inherent virtues as a man. These priorities are not quite identical to those privileged by certain Western patriarchal societies of the past, but they certainly rhyme.

Trump could never have brought these men into the Republican coalition so swiftly. His inherited wealth differentiates him more distinctly in the eyes of younger generations, and he is prone to conceptual incoherence that makes pinning many of his policies down maddeningly difficult. While his 2020 opponent Joe Biden wrestled madly with his stutter and his advanced age, he still managed to articulate sophisticated ideas and plans of action; for all of Trump's sound and fury, he all too frequently signifies nothing.

No, it is Rogan who remade the cultural makeup of the Republican Party, which has sought to cast off its reputation as a prudish bloc of censorious blowhards. Their attempted reinvention as a bastion of fun, looseness and free thinking, in contrast to the clinical sterility of Democratic spaces, proved wildly successful. Our cultural milieu around masculinity swung back into traditionalist modes of understanding, its sameness obfuscated by Rogan's fresh coat of paint and the underdog status part and parcel with unpopularity in academic and elite professional circles. Trump consequently used this secondary base to reforge his coalition by linking such views on masculinity to his own perilously nebulous political program.

Ever the sorts to run headlong into their own rakes, the Democratic Party and its institutional functionaries demonstrated they are either incapable of or cannot bother to articulating to young male voters good reasons to support liberal policies. Democratic strategies instead favored appealing to the moral compass, a tactic that loses its efficacy with poorer voters who feel greater pressure to act in their perceived self-interest.

Emboldened by the optimism of the early Obama years, a critical mass of Democrats embraced an early 2010s study proclaiming that 'demographics is destiny,' assuming the growth of nonwhite, non-Protestant groups signaled an inevitable sea change toward long-term Democratic dominance. While this prediction did not specifically mention gender dynamics, the underlying assumptions of the study were that the dominant demographic players of American politics were on their ways out, which attitudinally shaped the aggressiveness with which liberal-left actors effected measures to pursue gender egalitarianism.

While noble, there is more to this picture than meets the eye. If American men today were fine and dandy, even as the patriarchal systems that upheld their ill-gotten socioeconomic dominance began to crumble, then the overtures of Roganism would have little foothold in their minds. However, the project of dismantling these systems in American society has been dangerously uneven, seemingly ignorant of issues that might befall those whose unwarranted privileges have begun to disappear. We should not stop, but we must do better.

Economic opportunity has begun to dry up for many young men in the U.S. They are leaving college-level education behind at alarming rates. The gender wage gap is thankfully closing, but we can chalk up too much of this closure to stagnation in and neglect towards male-dominated industries, even as the Biden presidency ushered in high wage gains for working-class jobs.

Apart from a slow trickle of worried op-eds, the media wing of the Democratic Party has been virtually silent on these issues. After all, it is not politically expedient for a movement that defines itself upon raising up the underprivileged to appear sympathetic to a group of people that has traditionally enjoyed some degree of dominance. However, the electoral calculus of such nonchalance is mistaken: there are simply too many young men captive to bitter Republican messaging on these issues for Democrats to ignore.

Voters, on average, find appeals to their own self-interest most compelling of all. Yet the dominant Democratic messages on matters of gender often serve to affirm female security above all else, espousing a false choice between male and female priorities. Slogans such as 'men should not have control over women's bodies' have no underlying misandry to them, but they do imply the liberal-left political movement assigns little value to men's opinions. Even though this does not hold true for most Democrats, the miscast insinuation embedded within such a slogan is that they prefer men to simply vote blue and then move out of the way. Why, then, would men choose to align themselves with a political movement that appears to espouse their own enfeeblement as desirable, even virtuous? Democrats thereby neglect discussing the benefits men might enjoy from legalized abortion, such as lower crime rates over time. Modern feminist scholars have spilled much ink over how patriarchal systems have deleterious effects on the men they empower, thus indicating that measures aimed at helping women prove beneficial to everyone, but Democrats have inexplicably favored demographic grandstanding instead of pressing this point. Additionally, Democrats seemingly have no interest in indicating the inverse: that policies that benefit men need not cut into women's increasing socioeconomic parity. Doing so would undoubtedly relieve the societal pressure they feel to neglect the educational woes that have befallen young American men of late.

In short, the ineptitude and disinterest with which the Democratic Party has conducted itself around young men led to many of them capitulate to the Trumpian political program. If Democrats are to rediscover political success on a national level, their current tactics regarding gender issue badly need fixing.

Mac Miller's *Balloonerism* is literally and figuratively timeless

by Maximo Bratter '25
A&E EDITOR

Mac Miller's *Balloonerism* (2024) exceeds the intangible constraints set by time and space. Recorded in 2014, posthumously released a decade later, *Balloonerism* sounds calm and collected like a premeditated studio release but was actually recorded with a temporal urgency that does not align with the fact that it never officially appeared during the rapper's lifetime.

According to *Dissect* (via Josh Berg, Mac Miller's studio engineer), the album is truly a relic of the past; it was essentially orchestrated in the span of two weeks and has been left mostly unadulterated over the years. As with Miller's other posthumous albums, like *Circles* (2020) and *Faces* (commercially released in 2021, but also recorded in 2014), the artist's pronounced conceptual vision supersedes any executive desire to tamper with the work of the deceased. And this is not just out of respect for the deceased, but for the sake of leaving his clear-cut sonic framework uncomplicated. But *Balloonerism* is by no means a leftover rough draft, and although it touches on many of the same themes as Miller's final few musical outputs, it serves as a retrospective preface for what was to come as the Pittsburgh musician continued to develop his sound.

Balloonerism marks an inflection point for Miller in multiple ways. It was the literal mid-point of his active music career while also indicating a shift in content and stylistic experimentation. We see bits and pieces of the past and future alike on the album. This is before Miller began to fully grasp his subversive talent on an effort like *Circles*, so mixtures of blunt childish wonder in both lyrics and instrumentation appear. The latter is most apparent in his collaborations with Thundercat throughout the production of Balloonerism on songs like "Funny Papers" and "5 Dollar Pony Rides."

But this is not a matter of Mac delegating the difficult duties of trying new tactics to a peer, as the artist himself is credited multiple times as a contributor to production or the sole producer himself… kind of. Miller tags himself as his alter-ego Larry Fisherman, the much more jazz-soul oriented counterpart to his rapper roots, further delineating this split between what once was and what is but also how the two can coexist. With Fisherman on the shimmering strings and Miller on vocals for "Manakins," the artist questions his grip on reality and, ironically, his own identity with all the voices that seem to permeate around him with unsolicited advice.

But let us not forget that Miller is also the same dude who made coming-of-age anthems like "The Spins" and "Kool Aid & Frozen Pizza." In *Balloonerism*, he clearly still holds onto this youth with a track like "Stoned" but with the added years that promote reflection and maturity on ideas that may have once been glossed over. Although "Stoned" talks about a "she" that is never identified (we do not know if this is a real person, Mac talking to himself, etc.), the rebellious act of smoking weed is connoted as a solution to "pain" rather than existing in a fun-loving vacuum.

There is an overwhelming realization on *Balloonerism* that much of the good of Mac's life–the money, acclaim, fame and more—comes with the bad of criticism and overindulgence. "Rick's Piano," fittingly located at the end of the album, exudes this type of self-consciousness. With the refrain "the best is yet to come," Miller is telling us and/or himself that regardless of what you may have thought of him at the time—between those who felt *K.I.D.S* (2009) was mindless but fun or songs like "Donald Trump" and "Missed Calls" were tacky—there is a truer form of himself that he had yet to realize. This is especially eerie considering the temporal context around *Balloonerism*. Similarly disarming is the figurative existentialism that the track concludes with, questioning the feeling of death in such a heavy manner that the circularity of the instrumental and construction of "Rick's Piano" which precedes it feels as desperate as the aforementioned lyrical motif.

Mac still tries to leave room for playtime in the midst of all this doom and gloom with "5 Dollar Pony Rides," which is a burst of energy that breaks up the first third of the album. Still, as Mac does best, there is a twinge of two-facedness to the sexual relationship described in the song; his female counterpart desires and/or needs Mac to fulfill gaps of happiness in her life that are irrelevant to him as a person, but that he can suffice regardless. And in this case, it is a father-figure. This is some weighty and burdensome stuff.

It is a somber conundrum that an album like *Balloonerism* feels like a creative breakthrough that was delayed for more misshapen output like *GO:OD AM* (2015) and *The Divine Feminine* (2016) and that it teased a potential that was aggressively realized through the force of his abrupt fatality. But the reality of life and death takes nothing away from an album that would have been as great 10 years ago as it is today.

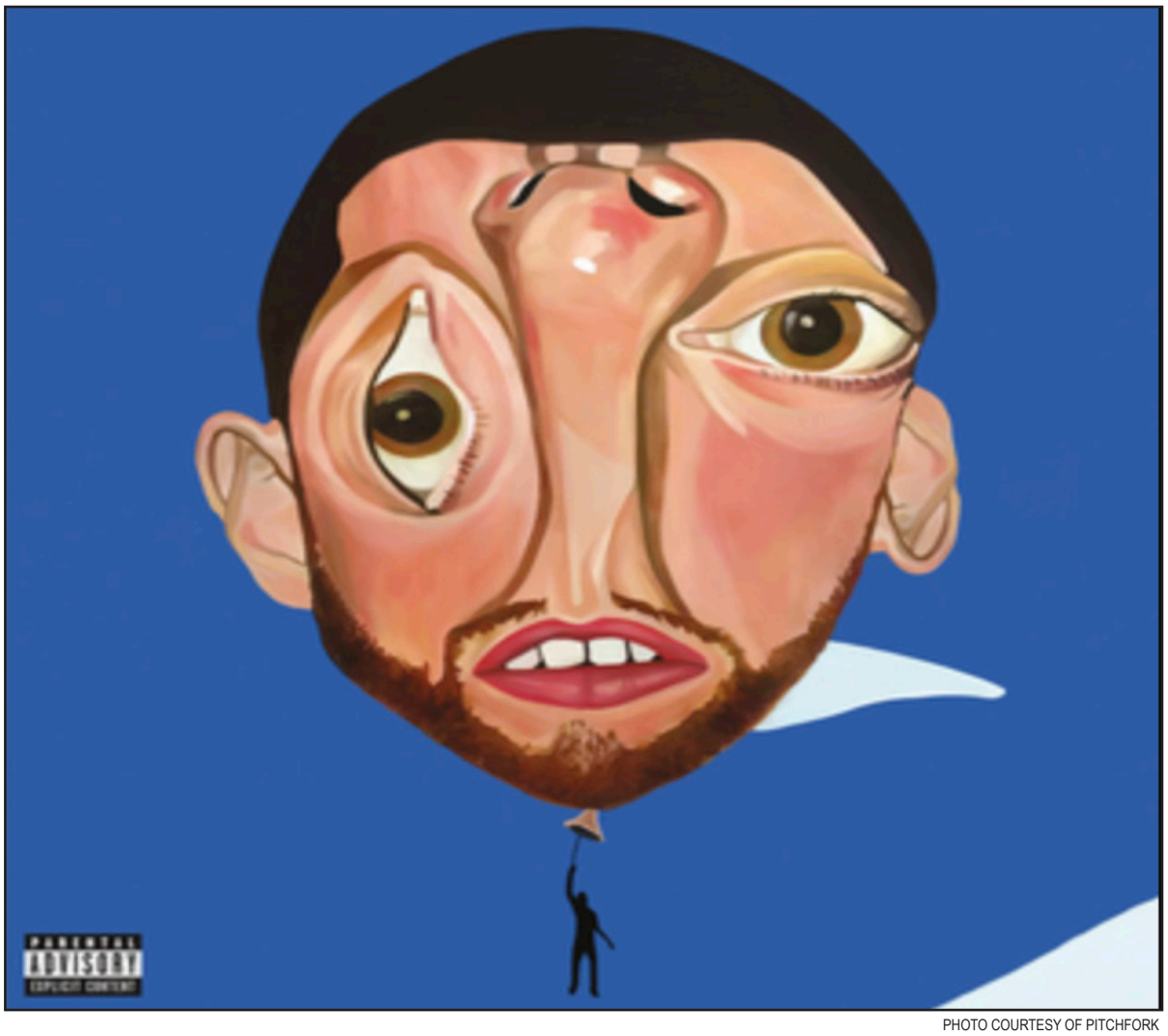

PHOTO COURTESY OF PITCHFORK

This is the 6th posthumous release from Mac Miller's estate, including both deluxe versions of prior releases and previously unreleased material.

Nosferatu (2024): eerie masterclass or sensual creep show?

by Ian Brassard '27
A&E CONTRIBUTOR

Robert Eggers' fourth major production puts a a modern spin on a classic tale. One of 2024's final major releases was his interpretation, or remake, of the German silent expressionist film *Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror* (1922). The titular vampire has ensnared a recently married young woman who pleaded for companionship when she was a young girl, and now he is finally ready to take her as his own. As the truth slowly unravels itself, death and terror burst from the confines of the decrepit castle in which Nosferatu resides.

Nosferatu was predestined to be a successful film in profit and acclaim alike. Most teenagers and young adults may have never seen a silent film, let alone one from Germany, like *Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror*. To many, Nosferatu himself is nothing more than an obscure reference made in an iconic SpongeBob Squarepants episode. This distance provides the time and space to enable this remake to feel much closer to the original narrative of Bram Stoker's 1897 novel *Dracula*. The lack of an audience connection makes Eggers' life much easier from a creative standpoint; many of his depictive decisions are more aligned with his personal preferences and beliefs than that of the story's first cinematic trial. Having seen one of Eggers' earlier films, *The Lighthouse* (2019), I had a sense for how Eggers wants his films to look and behave. With *The Lighthouse*, Eggers delivered a strong effort that was psychological, intense and unnerving. With Nosferatu, however, the results leave a bit more to be desired.

The film's personnel is what initially leads the film awry. Lily Rose-Depp steals several scenes she is in with her embodied horror acting on full display. The unnatural convulsions, rolled-back eyes and disturbing postures are quick callbacks to films such as *The Exorcist* (1973). She easily conveys the strongest performance, though Bill Skarsgård does an effective job leaning into a demonic role once again—he played Pennywise in the *It* reboot—as the titular vampire. Benefitting from some appropriately nasty prosthetic makeup, Skarsgård is fitting as the larger-than-life villain. He did background training with an opera singer to lower his voice, which proved to be helpful, as his presence is all the more creepy when his ultra-low timbre booms across the screen. As for the supporting cast, however, there is frankly not much to remark on. The other characters were unfortunately unremarkable, feeling much closer to thinly developed archetypes than genuine people.

However, the film does indeed easily deliver a gothic, dreary and chilly atmosphere that takes advantage of the winter setting by maximizing bleak, pale colors alongside black clothing and white snow. Eggers enjoys this kind of color scheme, and he continues to improve this strength with *Nosferatu*. The aesthetic of the film feels very faithful to the original material, both book and film, and does a great job of bringing back the classic feel of a goth horror film. This is further accentuated by smart set design and costume work that is effective at reinforcing the time period and helping further immerse the audience into feeling like they are right alongside the Hutter couple in the fictional town of Wisborg.

Where *Nosferatu* really fails is its screenplay. The film is pretty faithful to the original from over a century ago, though it just cannot help itself in making needless modern adjustments. One of the most frustrating of these is the inclusion of several sex scenes. There is no sex in the original film, and there is no need to include it in the remake. It is presumably the need to keep viewers excited and engaged that inspired the addition. In the original film, *Nosferatu* only desires the blood of a pure-hearted woman, whereas in the modern iteration, both blood and sex are needed. It is simply aesthetically overindulgent for this horror film to include, and is a reflection of the modern audience and what must be in a film in order for viewers to stay invested in the modern day. While this does not ruin the movie by any means, it is a shame to see what is otherwise a fairly strong adaptation be taken down several pegs by making awkward changes and relying too heavily on its premise and leads.

PHOTO COURTESY OF FOCUS FEATURES

***Nosferatu* is another addition to the collection of intellectual-property reboots that have proliferated in the 21st century of film.**

January 30, 2025

Tennis spotlight: champions and drama

by Alex Wagner '28
STAFF WRITER

PHOTO COURTESY OF SPORTINGNEWS.COM

Jannik Sinner wins his third Grand Slam of his career at Australian Open.

The Australian Open, one of the four major tennis tournaments and also known as a "Grand Slam," concluded this past week. On Saturday, America's Madison Keys, ranked #19 and upset two-time defending Australian Open champion and world number one Aryna Sabalenka in a thrilling three-set match to claim her first Grand Slam title. Both players being dominant servers, Keys immediately took advantage of Sabalenka's shaky first few service games, where she committed four double faults, earning a 4-1 first-set lead that allowed her to take the first set 6-3 in 35 minutes. But Sabalenka came storming back, hitting several unpredictable drop shots that allowed her to take the second set comfortably, 6-2. The third and final set was much more back-and-forth than the previous sets, as both players fought desperately to hold serve. Eventually, up 6-5 on serve, Keys capitalized on her second championship point, hitting an angled winner for the victory.

On Sunday, number one ranked Jannik Sinner defeated number two ranked Alexander Zverev, 6-3, 7-6 (4), 6-3, with a near flawless performance to defend his title in Australia. Sinner comfortably held serve, giving Zverev zero break point opportunities, and capitalized on his own few opportunities to break Zverev's serve. This victory marks Sinner's third straight hard-court Grand Slam title.

Novak Djokovic, 24-time Grand Slam champion, got injured once again in the later rounds of a Grand Slam. He had to retire (forfeit) his semifinal match against Zverev after a grueling 81-minute first set due to a torn muscle in his left hamstring, an injury he sustained in an epic comeback victory over Carlos Alacaraz in the quarterfinals. Last May, Djokovic withdrew from the French Open in Paris before his quarterfinal match because of a torn meniscus in his knee. With these recurring injuries, some question whether Djokovic's retirement is nearing. He even admitted that this past Australian Open may be his last. Unlike Nadal and Federer, who sustained numerous injuries towards the end of their careers, Djokovic has stayed healthy, winning four Grand Slams after turning 35 years old. Even at 37 years old, Djokovic's talent is still world-class. However, constantly being hindered by injury at his age casts doubt on his future in tennis.

The most notable story hovering over the world of tennis for the past 10 months is Jannik Sinner's controversial doping case. Last March, the Italian superstar failed two separate drug tests for clostebol, an anabolic steroid that is readily available in Italy but not elsewhere. Sinner stated that his fitness coach accidentally used a spray containing clostebol on a cut that Sinner had sustained. The substance was also used during massages. This sparked a multi-month investigation by the International Integrity Tennis Agency (ITIA), concluding that Sinner violated Article 2.1 and Article 2.2 of the Tennis Anti-Doping Programme (TADP). Despite this violation, the ITIA did not suspend Sinner, only forcing him to forfeit his prize money and his earned ranking points at the Indian Wells tournament in March.

Many were shocked by this decision to let Sinner continue playing. However, just over a month after the ITIA decision, the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) announced that it would appeal this decision, seeking a 1-2 year ineligibility punishment. The hearing will occur in April 2025, and Sinner, who is dominating tennis, will either be cleared or suspended.

It is important to note that women's world number two, Iga Świątek, was suspended in December of 2024 for one month because of a failed drug test with very similar circumstances to Sinner. Similarly, Nicolas Jarry, Sinner's first-round opponent in the Australian Open, served an 11-month suspension for unintentionally consuming illegal substances. Based on these two similar cases, Sinner may face suspension.

Sinner's hearing in April will be critical. If he is only issued a one-month suspension, he can still participate in the remaining three Grand Slam tournaments of the calendar year. However, if he is suspended for over a year, he will miss out on a golden opportunity to win many Grand Slams in the prime years of his career against little competition.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SPORTS ILLUSTRATED

American tennis player Madison Keys wins first Grand Slam of her career.

January 30, 2025

Hamilton winter weekend sports review

by Andrew Brennan ’25
SPORTS EDITOR

Men’s Basketball:

The men’s basketball team soundly defeated Amherst College 84-60 for the team’s first home win of 2025. The 24-point victory on Saturday, Jan. 25 was their second largest margin of victory this season. After going down 7-5 early on, Hamilton took control of the game with a 14-0 run and never let go. Hank Morgan ’25 led the Continentals in scoring with 29 points, shooting an efficient 11-14 from the field. Combined with a strong bench effort, the Continentals tallied an 18-0 advantage in bench points in the first 20 minutes, which led to a run-away victory. With his impressive shooting, Morgan continues to lead the NESCAC in scoring this season with 21.4 points per game. Hamilton’s win over Amherst earns them their second win in a row and puts the team at 14-4 overall and 2-2 in the NESCAC. Hamilton’s next game is on Friday, Jan. 31 at 7 p.m. against Bowdoin in Brunswick, Maine.

Women’s Basketball:

The women’s basketball team suffered their second straight loss against Amherst College, losing 65-58. Despite leading 58-56 with just over four minutes left in the game, Amherst went on a 9-0 run, with all nine points being free throws to steal the game away from the Continentals. Kendall Harris ’27 led Hamilton in scoring with 19 points, including eight in the fourth quarter. She is currently ranked fifth in the NESCAC for points per game with 16.8. Taylor Lambo ’26 notched her 10th double-double of the season with 13 points and 13 rebounds. Lambo also recorded five offensive rebounds and now leads the NESCAC in rebounds per game with 11.1. Despite their recent losses, Hamilton has gone an impressive 13-5 this season, including three victories with a margin of victory over 20 points. Their next game is on Friday, Jan. 31 at 7 p.m. against a highly ranked Bowdoin team in Margaret Bundy Scott Field House where they will look to regain some momentum with a win.

Men’s Ice Hockey:

In Hamilton’s first Make-A-Wish Charity game, the men’s hockey team won their seventh straight victory in a 4-3 battle against Amherst College, thanks in large part to Luke Tchor’s ’27 four-point night including a hat trick and an assist, his first hat trick at Hamilton. This outstanding effort led to Tchor being named the NESCAC Men’s Hockey Player of the Week. Taking a 1-0 lead with just over six minutes left in the first period, Hamilton never trailed throughout the rest of the game. With two more goals scored later by Tchor and one by Devon de Vries ’27, Amherst was unable to overcome Hamilton’s offense despite scoring three goals of their own and having a chance to tie the game in the final minutes.

Hamilton’s win streak is its longest since 2017, a streak which has pushed the Continentals to the top of the NESCAC standings at 13-3-0 and 9-1 in in-conference matchups. The team has also moved up in the rankings to eighth in the country after three straight weeks at ninth. The Continentals are third in Division III in scoring defense, fourth in scoring margin and 12th in scoring offense. Tchor leads the NESCAC with 12 goals and is tied for first with 21 points. Their next game is against Wesleyan on Friday, Jan. 21 at 7 p.m. in Middletown, Connecticut.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JOSH MCKEE

Hank Morgan ’25 shoots a three-pointer in a victory over Trinity over the weekend.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JOSH MCKEE

The ceremonial first puck with Hamilton’s Jackson Krock ’26 and Amherst’s Bobby Luca ’25 prior to the Make-A-Wish Charity Game.

Women’s Ice Hockey:

After defeating Connecticut College 2-1 in the first of two consecutive matchups, the Hamilton women’s hockey team ended with a 2-2 tie in their second matchup. After a scoreless first period, Hamilton took a 2-0 lead thanks to two goals scored by Sophia Testa ’26 and Ava Romano ’27. Less than a minute after Hamilton’s second goal, Amherst skater Claire Sammons ’25 scored, cutting the deficit to one. Still down one goal with 2:38 to go in the third period, Connecticut College pulled their goaltender for a sixth skater, which led to a tying goal 82 seconds later. Despite their newfound momentum, neither team could score in the two overtime periods. Hamilton is now 8-8-2 on the season, with four of those wins coming in the last five games. Their next game is against Williams College on Friday, Jan. 31 at 7 p.m. in Russell Sage Rink, where they will look to regain their previous momentum and add another in-conference win to their resume.